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MIDDLETON ISLAND

Chances are, you've never heard of Middleton Island unless you have read Ron Benice's book "*Alaska Tokens*" cover to cover. And still, you might have missed it. The new edition, "*Alaska & Yukon Tokens*" eliminated the little blurbs about the geographical location, so you still might be in the dark.

The "*Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*" gives the following description:

Middleton Island: *island*, 19 mi. long, in Gulf of Alaska, 80 mi. SW of Cordova, Malaspina Coastal Plain; 59° 26' N, 146° 20' W. ... Named in 1794 by Capt. George Vancouver, RN, "probably after Sir Charles Middleton, a rear admiral and comptroller of the navy" (Wagner, 1937).¹

Many people know of the "golden sands" of Nome. I was surprised to learn that Nome is not the only place where there was beach mining. Perhaps the second most profitable was around Yakutat and Cape Yakutaga, on the Gulf of Alaska.

The USGS Alaska Data File, Open-File Report 02-114 gives the following description of the beach on Middleton Island:

"Storm waves concentrate garnet-rich heavy mineral sands that contain small amounts of placer gold along the southwest headland of Middleton Island (Brooks, 1913; Reimnitz and Plafker, 1976). Other beaches around the island may also contain small amounts of placer gold. Some mining occurred as early as 1901, and by 1913, about 400 ounces of gold were estimated to have been produced (Brooks, 1913). The recovered gold was fine and flat; the coarsest grain weighed about 0.05 ounce (Brooks, 1913). Later residents of the Middleton Island military facilities conducted recreational placer gold mining on the island beaches (George Plafker, oral commun., 2001). The gold is derived from the reworking of marine glacial deposits of the upper Cenozoic Yakataga Formation. These rocks make up the bedrock of Middleton Island and much of the surrounding continental shelf (Reimnitz and Plafker, 1976)."²

Fox farming appears to have occurred concurrently with mining.

"One of the most interesting fox farms in Alaska is located on Middleton Island, about 125 miles from Valdez. It was established more than 20 years ago (ed. note: 1905) by P.D. Temple and subsequently passed into the hands of Thomas Vesey Smith, who was known as "Middleton Island" Smith, in order to distinguish him from "Kayak Island" Smith, a trader who lived near Controller Bay." This farm is now owned by Tim Marcum, and is operated by a native and his wife."³

"*Middleton Island, Gulf of Alaska*. - This island is under lease to Joseph Ibach of Cordova. The number of skins taken in 1919 has not been reported, but it is understood that the results were satisfactory."⁴

Fox farming appears to have carried on through different owners at least until 1923, when the National Geographic magazine carried a 14 page article with photos by Margery P. Parker titled "A Northern Crusoe's Island: life on a fox farm off the coast of Alaska."

Nothing is found from this time, to World War II, and little from World War II to 1956 in the cold war:

Continued on page 21

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

I have always wanted to do an article about Middleton Island (I have this thing for islands). There just was not much out there. So, I dug further on the net and found out that there was more activity on Middleton than I had imagined.

This month we complete David Phillips "Great Alaskan Wooden Token Expedition. We have already received a couple of short article from Dave, so we are good to go in that respect.

eBay was relatively quite this month. The big surprise was the A.G.M. Co. (Thane) "this is a specimen" token. It is unlisted in Benice, but is noted. At \$405.00, that is a healthy price for a maverick. It is illustrated in "For the Record."

A counterstamped silver dollar from Umnak, 1942, brought \$355. I trust the source (Kaye Dethridge), but it leads me to worry about the possibility of some unscrupulous sellers fabricating like items.

Be aware that there are commemorative AYPE gold-like token out there celebrating the 100th anniversary. See FTR. These are not the gold originals

The April issue will be a bit early, I hope, as our next auction is April 10, and I will include the Alaska items from that auction in the newsletter.

Alaskan Token Collector & Polar Numismatist, published 10 times per year, is a publication of Alaska Rare Coins. All articles remain the property of the authors and may not be reprinted without their consent.

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Subscription Rates: (all first class or airmail)
 United States - \$20 per year
 Canada - \$25 per year
 Elsewhere - \$35 per year

Collector's Advertising Rates:
 1 page - \$15 1/2 page - \$8 1/4 page - \$5
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PRICES REALIZED

Selected prices realized from eBay:

Anchorage , Cheechako, 12½¢, B-11bvi	22.72
Anchorage , D&D Bar, 25¢, B-14a	5.51
Barrow , Tony's Rec., 50¢, B-1d	15.00OB
Bethel , N.C. Co., 25¢, B-2a	125.00OB
Cape Edwards , Deep Sea, 5¢, B-1a	255.00
Chitina , Nevada Bar, 12½¢, B-4a	125.00OB
Cleary , W&W, 25¢, B-5a	39.12
Cordova , The Club, 12½¢, B-7a	56.00
Cordova , Rosswog, 6¼¢, B-34b	45.00OB
Cordova , Southern Club, 6¼¢, B-36a	50.05
Cordova , Winsor Hotel, 12½¢, B-41c	OB95.00NB
Fairbanks , Brown Derby, 5¢, B-10a	68.50
Fairbanks , Brown Derby, 12½, B-10c	107.50
Fairbanks , Fbks. Cigar Store, 6¼¢, questionable	10.50
Flat , Parker, B-3a	25.99
Fort Yukon , Carney & Irvin, 25¢, B-1a	65.00OB
Fort Yukon , FH Hotel, 25¢, B-4a	35.00
Hawk Inlet , Harris, 25¢, B-1c	305.00
Juneau , Alaskan Hotel Bar, 12½¢, B-2b	60.99
Juneau , Juneau Drug, 6¼¢, B-35b	224.50
Ketchikan , Butterhorn Bakery, Sm. Loaf, B-8a	175.00OB
Ketchikan , Kushi, 25¢, B-27b	26.00
Ketchikan , Lange's, \$1, B-29d	OB20.00NB
Ketchikan , Lucky Spot, 10¢, B-32b	16.79
Ketchikan , Northern Hotel, 6¼¢, B-38a	195.00OB
Ketchikan , Slotten's, 5¢, B-58a	260.00
Ketchikan , Stedman Hotel, \$1, B-60di	OB40.00NB
Long , Willis, 25¢, B-2a	70.99
Long , Willis, 25¢, B-2a	99.98
Nome , North Pole Bakery, 10¢, B-39b	125.00OB
Palmer , ARRC, complete set of 8, B-1	OB1,650.00NB
Palmer , ARRC, complete set of 8, B-1	RLOB1,695.00NB
Pybus Bay , AK Pac Fish, \$1, B-1e, corr, holed	497.00
Seward , North., 12½¢, B-8biii, NGC-63	BIN450.00DNS
Seward , Palace, 12½¢, B-9b	46.00
Skagway , M&E, \$1, B-16e	OB19.99NB
Skagway , M&E, \$5, B-16f	24.99OB
(Thane) , AGM Co. "This is a specimen" B-unl	405.00
Umnak , c/s Morgan Dollar, 1942	355.00
Valdez , CBB, 12½¢, B-4a	48.99OB
Valdez , CBB, \$1, B-4ci	OB977.00NB
Yes Bay , AK Pac. Fish., \$1, B-3e	51.00
AYPE , ¼ DWT	RLOB175.00NB
AYPE , ½ DWT, NGC-65	RLBIN850.00
AYPE , ½ DWT	207.50
AYPE , 1 DWT	306.50
Alaska Gold , Parka Head, ¼, NGC-64	RLBIN3,750.00
Native Gold , Eagle Creek set, #5	1,125.00
Native Gold , 1 oz., #5	1,125.00

OB = Opening Bid NB = No Bid RL = relist R = Reserve
 RNM = Reserve Not Met W = withdrawn BIN = Buy it now
 DNS = Did Not Sell FTR = see For the Record

MIDDLETON ISLAND, cont.

"November 12, 1956: The first link in the White Alice System was completed on this date between Middleton Island and Elmendorf Air Force Base."⁵

Middleton Island was to be part of the White Alice Communications System, part America's defences during the cold war.

"This was one of the first facilities to open. It was constructed in 1956 and opened on 29 November 1956. The first telephone call to use the WACS went through Middleton Island via Neklasson Lake (Wasilla). It has been turned over to the Federal Aviation Administration and most of the island is owned by a private group of lawyers, MIDICO. A pair of 60' billboard antennas linked Boswell Bay, 69 miles to the north, and a second set linked Neklasson Lake, 130 miles north. The equipment and power building was 4300 sf and constructed in six sections. POL storage was provided by three small tanks. Site condition is apparently good. The tropo equipment has been removed although the antennas are still standing. Middleton Island was an AC&W reserve site along with Ohlson Mountain, Cape Chiniak, Sitkinak, Fire Island, and Murphy dome. Several FAA personnel are stationed at the facility. Middleton Island was a remote station and considered a difficult post. A Mr. Flanley of Federal Electric was quoted in the Wall Street Journal as saying: "One of our best men couldn't take Middleton Island; it's wind-swept, small and bare as a baby's bottom. He got claustrophobia there; we moved him to another station and he's all right."⁶

The 720th ACWRON (Air Craft Control and Warning Squadron) was posted to Middleton Island. It was considered a remote site. I think that is an understatement.

Chits were issued for the Officers' Lounge and for the NCO Club - "The Inferno Club, International Airport, Middleton Island." Someone had a sense of humor!

¹Dictionary of Alaska Place Names, Donald J. Orth, Geological Survey Professional Paper 567, 1971.

²Alaska Resource Data File, Open-File Report 02-114, Travis L. Hudson.

³Alaska, An Empire in the Making, John J. Underwood; Dodd, Mead and Company, NY, 1915. Surprisingly, this book has about 6 pages about Middleton Island. Of



particular interest are the "Japanese" raids on the fox farm!

⁴Report of the United States Commissioner of Fisheries for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1919, Hugh M. Smith.

⁵Chronological History of the Alaskan Air Command, E. Marie Salley, Command Historian, circa 1970.

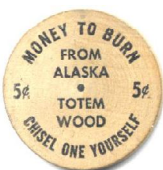
⁶Historical Overview and Inventory; White Alice Communications System, Georgeanne L. Reynolds, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Alaska District, April 1988.

MONEY TO BURN

by David Phillips

The Great Alaskan Wooden Token Expedition, Part 6

Back into the Yukon and down the Alaska Highway to Haines Junction where we turned down the one way in and out road to Haines, Alaska. We stopped over for two nights. We received great cooperation and lots of help from many folks in Haines. The result was twenty new woods from Haines!



Our first stop was the Haines Elks Club #2634, where two woods were acquired. The first, Bill's Club, was the forerunner of the formal Elks Club Bar, and was first brought to Haines from the Elks Lodge at nearby Skagway. Bill's Club was discontinued when the Elks Club was formed.



Our next stop was the American Legion, where two woods were acquired.



Size reduced.

A visit to the Pioneer Bar got me four more woods: one from when it was Marty's Pioneer Bar, and three more from the newer name, Pioneer Bar. The same family owns it, but it is a different generation now.

Next morning we went to the Chilkat Restaurant for breakfast and after a word with the waiter, a Chilkat Restaurant wood appeared (next page). This is the last issue of Chilkat Restaurant woods. No more are planned.

I checked in with O'Riley's Fogcutter Bar and was able to acquire one of the early woods there (next page).

MONEY TO BURN, cont.



Then I had a nice meeting with Doris Ward. She and her late husband, Karl, were joint proprietors of the Haines educational consulting company, Ward Consultation. I acquired several of the Ward Consultation woods saluting Haines Centennial, 1979-81. Two of these were errors: one with a double stamp on one side and a blank side; and a second with printing on one side only.



Also from Mrs. Ward, I acquired a "Helen's Shop wood. Helen's Shop is a gift shop that has been in Haines for many years. When time permits, I will try to find out more about this venerable business.



Last, but certainly not least, was a visit to the Harbor Bar. Here I found that a new owner took over in 2004 and introduced two new dated woods: black for beer and red for mixed drink. I was able to acquire a 2004 Beer. He issued a pair of woods again in 2005 and I acquired the mixed drink. No more yearly woods were made until 2008, when the owner had five made: beverage (soda-orange), coffee(brown), beer (red), wine (burgandy) and mixed drink (green). Lucky me, I was able to acquire one of each of these.



So, saying a fond farewell to a most benevolent town, we headed for Whitehorse where we explored, shopped and checked for Yukon tokens for two days before flying back to Vancouver, arriving safe and sound July 17th.

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CHALLENGE COINS



ALASKA: USAMEDAC Alaska, Arctic Medic, Year of the NCO, 2009. Red, white, blue, and black on silver. The center of the reverse is bronzed. 51mm.



FAIRBANKS: Veterans of Foreign Wars, Golden Heart Post 3629. Red enamel on gold, 38mm.



FORT RICHARDSON: HHD, 59th Signal Battalion. Red, white, blue, light blue, black and brown on bronze.



FORT WAINWRIGHT: 4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry, Thunderhorse. Red, white, blue, yellow and green on bronze.



THULE AIR BASE, GREENLAND: 12th Space Warning Squadron, Top of the World. Red, light blue, dark blue, white and yellow on brass.



NAS KEFLAVIK, ICELAND: Security K-9, Military Working Dog Handler. Red, white and blue on bronze, 57mm.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Most Challenge Coins are about 38 to 40mm. Some are larger, some smaller. All are shown at about 38mm, but this may not be actual size. Actual size is noted where known. If the enamel is shown "on gold" or "on silver", this should be assumed to be gold colored or silver colored and not the actual metal.

MONEY TO BURN, cont.

Notwithstanding all the "positive finds" noted in the foregoing, it also should be noted that there was an enormous amount of contacts made where no new wooden tokens were found. Countless bars, lounges, saloons, visitor information centers, thrift shops, second hand stores, antique shops and likely businesses were visited and people talked with!! Generally speaking, most folks approached were very helpful and in many cases, quite interested in my quest. I do believe there is now a much higher recognition throughout parts of Alaska of interest in and the value of tokens, particularly wooden tokens.

I really want to say a sincere thank you to all the folks who helped me with tips, leads, stories and suggestions during my tour of the Yukon and Alaska, looking for those "elusive woods!" Your assistance was truly appreciated! And so ends the account of this fun filled adventure.

FOR THE RECORD



(ANCHORAGE?): Alaska Forest Creations, Birch. Description on eBay was severely lacking. We think copper, and we think shown at actual size.



(ANCHORAGE): CIRI (Cook Inlet Regional Incorporated). Uniface, 39mm. Description said it looked like silver, but the image looked bronze.



HOMER: Lions Club, Silver Anniversary, 1964-1989, Fund Raising Activity. 1 oz. Silver. Thought we had run this before, but could not find it in the index.



UMNAK (ISLAND): Believed to be from a construction worker constructing a secret air base in World War II. Price realized - \$355. (submitted by Kaye Dethridge).



THANE: A.G.M. Co., This is a specimen. Aluminum, 21mm. Unlisted, but noted in Benice.



A.Y.P.E. CENTENNIAL: Brass token noting 100 years since the AYP Exposition in Seattle in 1909. Shown enlarged (actual size 16.5mm). "only 10,000 struck." The word only and 10,000 should never be used in the same sentence!



Here are a couple of Alaska Mint 1 oz. silver medals we have not seen before. Price-Gregory International, Alaska Division and Price/Phillips Alaska Alpine. Only one of each, \$25 each plus \$5 per order shipping.

For those of you with a computer and time, google John Fitzgerald Kennedy City, Alaska. Go ahead. I dare you. Or go to <http://community.adn.com/adn/node/147535>

After you read this. Ask yourself - did he have any bar tokens?

GREAT EXPLORERS MEDALS

OFFICIAL ISSUE OF THE INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL UNION

Sounds impressive, doesn't it? These are Franklin Mint medals noting great explorers, and we are offering those that are polar related. Each contains about 3/4 of an ounce of pure silver.



Rizo Mamiya explores Sakhalin Island.



Byrd Flies over the North Pole.



Scott Reaches the South Pole.



Fuchs Crosses Antarctica.



Amundsen Arrives at the South Pole.



Bellingshausen Circumnavigates Antarctica.



Barents reaches Spitzbergen.



Nordenskjöld completes NE Passage.



MacKenzie Reaches the Arctic Ocean.



Rasmussen Crosses the American Arctic.



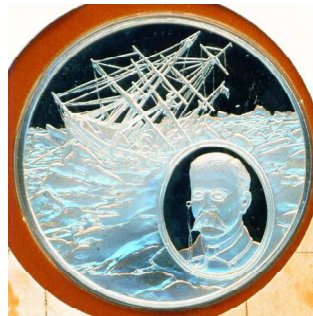
Stefansson Explores the Canadian Arctic.



Peary Reaches the North Pole.



Nansen Crosses Greenland.



DeLong Reaches New Siberian Islands.



Vitus Bering Sights Alaska.

All are in a philatelic cover and housed in the original album page with descriptive literature.

Only one of each, so please call or email.

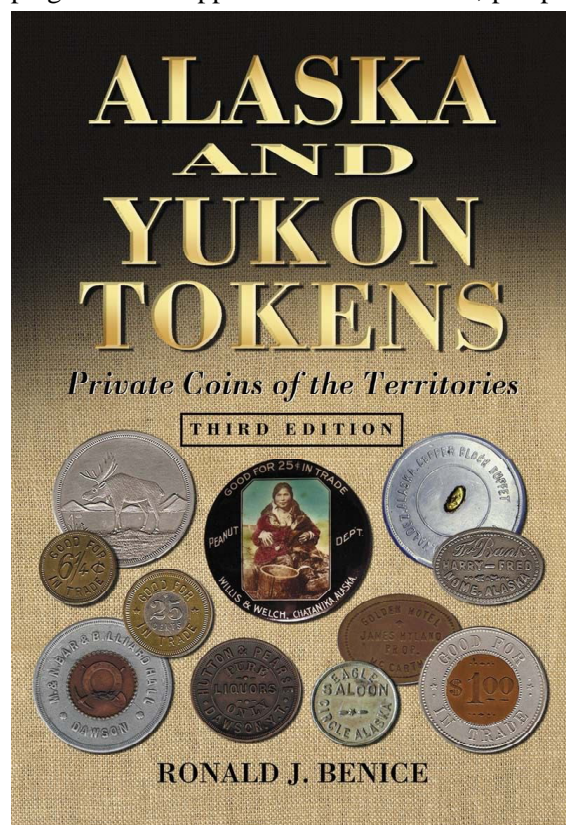
\$16 each plus \$5 per order for postage.

ALASKA AND YUKON TOKENS

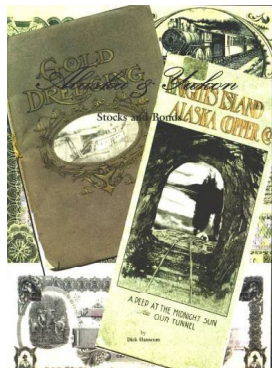
We are pleased to announce the arrival of Ron Benice's "Alaska and Yukon Tokens." They are now in stock and available for immediate shipping. All pre-orders have been filled, and were mailed the same day as the last issue of the newsletter. If you have not received yours, please let us know.

This reference is a must for any collector of Alaska or Yukon tokens. It includes many newly discovered tokens since the last edition in 1994. It even includes some that were not reported in this newsletter.

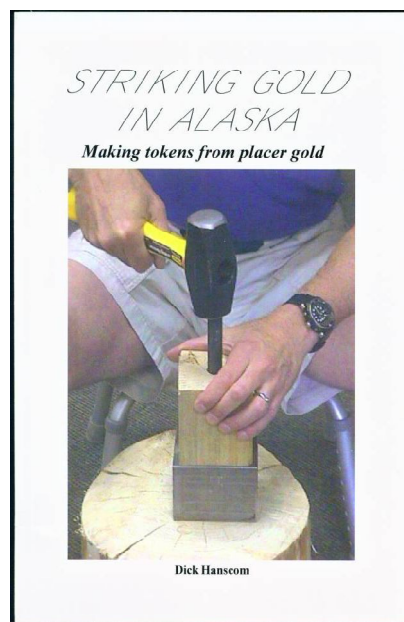
The price is \$46, and this includes priority mail shipping. Orders shipped to Canada are \$52, postpaid.



Collector wishes to buy needed Yukon tokens and exnumia. Please advise what you may have an price to: Len Buth, P.O. Box 28012, Oakridge P.O., 1201 Oxford St. W., London, Ontario, Canada N6H 5E1 or lbuth@webmanager.on.ca
#10/10



NEW BOOK



Your editor has finished his second book. While not as monumental as his first (Alaska & Yukon Stocks and Bonds), I dare say it is more educational. It is by no means a text book on minting. It recounts what I have done and proves anyone can do it.

"Striking Gold in Alaska" takes you step by step through my exercises in futility to create gold tokens struck from placer gold. It includes information that has not appeared in the newsletter.

The book is soft bound, 60 pages, 8.5 by 5.5 inches.

The price of the book is \$12, postpaid.

3RD TEN YEAR VOLUME

Over ten years in the making! Hours of blood sweat and tears! A monumental achievement! Only 7 left!

The 3rd Ten Year Volume, covering Vol. 21 to Vol. 30, 1999 to 2008 is finally available for immediate shipment. Approximately 800 pages, including all issues of the short-lived newsletter "Alaska & Yukon Stocks and Bonds." Bound in blue buckram. No image because it is quite plain, but massive.

Priced at \$195, postpaid by priority mail. For an extra \$5 (total \$200), we will throw in a copy of "Alaska & Yukon Stocks and Bonds," the book!